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ABSTRACT

Ideas discussed at the 1980 National Conference on Rural/Regional Educational Programs held in Portland, Oregon are presented in this Conference Reporter. Following a summary of executive committee activities and speeches concerning the future of rural/regional education and stressing the need for educators to assume leadership in rural education, the ways in which regional agencies can provide programs for the gifted and talented are described. Other topics covered include: School Standards for Local Districts and Education Service Districts; Staff Development and Teacher Inservice; Achieving Educational Equality for Rural Schools in the 1980's; The National Rural Project - Creative Strategies for Special Education Service Delivery; P.L. 94-142 and Rural Area Schools: A Case for Consortium; Inservice Education: Things that Work - Things that Don't Work - And Some Why's; Project CHILD; Comprehensive Help for Individual Learning Differences; Preparing Teachers for the Rural/Small School: The Oregon Way; Small Schools: Accomplishments and Challenges; and Teacher Training for the Rural Child. A directory of participants and a conference evaluation form are appended. (CM)

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CONFERENCE REPORTER FOR THE 1980 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL/REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Jantzen Beach Thunderbird Motel
Portland, Oregon

October 12-14, 1980

EDUCATING ALL CHILDREN IN THE 80's

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The Portland conference was a time for discussing ideas and renewing acquaintances. For Dr. Calvin Bones, incoming REA president, and Dr. Anita Lohr, outgoing president, it was a weekend of transition.

RURAL/REGIONAL EDUCATION REVISITED - A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Looking back on our Portland convention, and the positive forces at work there, is like breathing in the fresh air which also abounded at and around the Thunderbird Motor Inn. This was truely a working conference and one that was preceded by a great deal of individual and state activity in anticipation of the issues.

Let me first of all pause and thank our hosts, the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts and Multnomah County E.S.D. and in particular, Tom Sommerville, for the tremendous accommodations and arrangements.

Those that attended don't need to be reminded of the action that was taken, but I'm naturally going to be very interested in the follow-up activity and the promise for a future strong and healthy voice speaking for rural education.

The board of directors (executive committee) stayed over and met again on Wednesday prior to their return home to reflect on their responsibilities and to divide up the work to be done necessary to get the Rural Education Association moving toward some clearly identified goals and objectives.

Dick Miga will continue to provide the newsletter and serve to coordinate membership and dues until a permanent headquarters can be established. Lew Tamblin has agreed to continue as our fiscal agent until such time as a different financial management arrangement can be made.

Contract negotiation procedures are already started with Colorado State University, so as an agreement is reached we will pass the torch and proceed more deliberately toward providing equitable education for all children.

While the word "regional" was taken out of the name of our professional association to emphasize rural, let us not forget that regional or educational service agency administrators represent the majority of this association and provide one of the most effective linkages in any state to provide equitable education for rural students.

In closing, I want to both acknowledge and express my appreciation to the American Association of Education Service Agencies for making this Conference Reporter possible.

Have a great year.

Dr. Calvin Bones, President

RREA LOOKS TO THE FUTURE AS THE "RURAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION"

"The executive committee felt that if RREA was to become an active and workable group, there would have to be changes in roles and the by-laws that are absolutely inevitable," said Dr. Anita Lohr, outgoing RREA president, at the Tuesday meeting.

Lohr said that they felt the need to define the purpose of the organization, to broaden the base of participation and involvement and to consolidate the efforts of all those interested in improving education opportunities in the rural areas.

A subcommittee of the executive committee was established to determine just what the goals of the people who make up the membership are. On the committee was Dr. Lohr, Dr. Calvin Bones, Dr. Roy Brubacher, Donald Nall and Dr. Ivan Muse. A list of goals was formulated, which turned out to be sub-goals under one main goal: "To further the improvement of educational opportunities for all children in rural areas with additional attention to those for whom opportunities have been most severely limited in the past."

"We then asked, 'What do we need to do?' and came up with a list of objectives," she continued, not designed to be reached quickly, but rather long-range targets.

The subcommittee then asked themselves whether the by-laws and articles of incorporation were relevant to the new goals and objectives. "It became obvious that there were some changes in the by-laws that were going to have to be made," she said.

The institution of a delegate assembly was designed to broaden participation throughout the states. A 'trial' group of delegates was assembled Saturday in Portland. Incoming President Dr. Calvin Bones reported that the assembly was unanimous in its desire to disassociate with the National Education Association. He said there was a great deal of discussion regarding association with any other organization and a near-unanimous feeling that there should be none. The assembly considered the by-laws revision and the goals and objectives and made some ammendments.

It was determined that the disassociation with the NEA called for in the new by-laws would also mean losing the services of Lew Tamblin, RREA executive secretary and an NEA staff member. Lohr said that even though they would be losing an integral part of the organization, they eventually will want someone who could devote more time and be less committed to other responsibilities.

Lew Tamblin, RREA executive secretary, reviewed the history of RREA's association with the NEA and concluded, "I think this is a healthy step and should have been done five or seven years ago... But this does not mean my heart is not with REA and that I will not continue to be concerned with the things we see to be important for the health and education of the boys and girls in rural America."

The Chautauqua County BOCES in New York had been serving gratis as the field office under Richard Miga. Changes within the BOCES made continuation as the field office no longer possible, so the committee began looking for a new headquarters, preferably a college, where there would be a possibility for research in rural education.

Colorado State University appears to be such a location. The executive committee is now negotiating a contract for the college to provide publication support for the association. Present plans call for six publications per year. Membership services will continue to be handled from New York during the interim.

The committee felt that since many individual dues are paid by the member, for the next few years the dues should not exceed $50.

A motion to accept the goals and objectives as ammended was approved unanimously and likewise the by-laws revisions. The organization will now be known as the Rural Education Association.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the RREA for nearly 19 years, Lew Tamblin was presented a lifetime Honorary Membership.

Ballots were cast for two positions on the executive committee. Receiving the nod from the membership were James Jess, superintendent of the CAL Community School District in Latimer, Iowa, as the rural administrator representative, and Bruce Cowgill, chief administrator, E.S.U. 7, Silver Creek, Neb., as education service agency representative.

The Nominating Committee placed before the membership the names of Dr. Roy Brubacher, assistant commissioner, Colorado Department of Education, and Freeman VanWicker, district superintendent, Delaware/ Chenango BOCES, for the position of president-elect. Voting by the membership will take place by mailed ballot.

The Time and Place Committee selected Kansas State University for the 1983 conference site. Next year will be Tucson, Oct. 10-13, followed in 1982 in Rockland, Me.

THE FUTURE OF RURAL/REGIONAL EDUCATION

"There never has been a time when those of you in regional education have been as needed as you are right now," Verne Duncan, Oregon superintendent of public instruction, told the second general session.

Duncan said the movement to consolidate school districts is over and many people are asking, "Did we do the right thing?" People like having their own school districts, and there are good arguments for it.

The education service districts allow the small schools to provide quality programs by giving them access to the services that only large districts can afford on their own.

Duncan said Oregon is studying the philosophy of the ESD's and what services they offer, noting that 75% of the superintendents in Oregon support the existence of ESD's.

The key is to realize that large schools as well as small schools can use the alliance found in the ESD. He used co-op purchasing as an example, noting how Portland gained as the smaller districts joined Multnomah County ESD's co-op purchasing program.

"Rather than impose, our aim in Washington is to let rural people solve their own problems, find their own solutions; then we will try to fund these solutions," said Norm Hearn, deputy director, Policy Planning and Program Development, U.S. Department of Education. "That's the only philosophy that really works. We need to do it from the bottom up, not the top down."

Hearn said that defining rural education can be difficult because there are four distinct regions in rural America, each with its own set of problems.

The prosperous mid-continent farmer, such as in Iowa or Minnesota, has different problems than the impoverished rural Southern and Appalachian farmer. The needs of the New England "gentleman farmer" fresh out of the city are considerably different than those of farmers in the sparsely-populated rural areas of the West and Southwest.

Hearn said the Carter Administration is budgeting about $10 million in the next fiscal year for rural education programs. He said that technical assistance and rural-initiated research projects will be high on the list of funded programs along with a renewed effort to disseminate information on these projects.

In addressing the future, Hearn said, "Your organization must get your act together so we in Washington know who to address; we want to know who speaks for rural education. You need to come to some concensus regarding policies."

"You must decide whether you are looking for new services or better delivery of present ones. You must establish alliances, set targets and develop strategy."

SPEAK UP FOR EDUCATION

"We must move outside the 'in basket,' finding things that need to be done in rural education," incoming REA President Dr. Calvin Bones told the final general session.

Dr. Bones said he wanted them to take back with them a skeleton of three "bones."

The "wish bone" is the set of REA goals and objectives. "Acquaint yourself with the goals and objectives, identify with them so you will know how to carry them out."

The "back bone" is leadership. "You are the individuals I am looking to to provide leadership in rural American education."

The "funny bone" is what makes everything bearable - fun, entertainment, memories.

"I think it's time for those of us who are professional educators or those who are supporters of education to talk about what's right with education in this country," Representative Nancy Ryles told the session. Ryles is an Oregon State Legislator and school board member.

Ryles outlined the financial traumas the state, and school districts in particular, have been through over the past few years. "After all this, can we really be positive about education?" she asked, answering in the affirmative.

Ryles outlined many of the figures that have been used to downgrade U.S. education and showed how they should be positively interpreted.

As an example, she gave figures showing that in 1966 only four per cent of all high school seniors took the SAT exam. Today, about one-half of the students take the test. It's no wonder that the AVERAGE test score is down, but not necessarily performance.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS: HOW TO SURVIVE IN THE '80'S
or SHAKESPEARE WAS A SMALL-TOWN BOY

We tend to identify the geniuses of our civilization with an urban environment. But the rural communities do, in fact, contribute their share of gifted and talented persons. Perhaps, had there been regional education services in Shakespeare's day, Stratford-on-Avon and not London would have become the theatrical center of the English-speaking world.

This was the message brought to the RREA Conference by Martin Birnbaum, gifted and talented education specialist with Multnomah County Education Service District, Portland. Birnbaum said we need to examine five topics:

1. Why should we have programs for gifted and talented students?
2. Who are the gifted and how can we find them?
3. What are programs that work?
4. What are the survival strategies we will need for the '80's?
5. What is the regional role?

There are three main reasons why educators should be concerned with programs for the gifted. First, gifted children present special problems to themselves, to their teachers, to their schools and to their parents. Second, their parents often present special problems to the schools - and can either help develop good rapport between school and community or can be detrimental. And finally, educators have an ethical, if not legal, responsibility to provide an appropriate learning experience for all children, including the gifted.

Identification systems abound and there are several adequate definitions. The one Birnbaum uses is simple: the gifted child is one who excels or has the potential to excel. He therefore needs greater challenges than the regular school curriculum provides. Areas of excellence include: 1) high intelligence; 2) high academic achievement; 3) visual and performing arts; 4) creative thinking; and 5) leadership.

Any of the traditional programs will work for gifted students if the program is designed properly. Special classes, resource rooms, field study, independent study, acceleration - all may be used, but judiciously, since each has dangers as well as advantages.

If our programs are to succeed, we need to start with small pilot efforts and be willing to change as the programs grow. One excellent way to begin is with a 'pull-out' program that sends selected children to special interest classes, whether conducted by the school or an outside agency, such as a museum. Such programs are very popular. We need to provide leadership to move from the 'pull-out' program, which implies the student is gifted for only a couple hours each week, to a comprehensive five day per week program. Only then will we be meeting the gifted student's needs.

The role of the regional agency is crucial. No district, except those large enough to comprise 'regions' themselves, can provide the full range of services needed by gifted students. Regional agencies can best serve in the following capacities:

1. providing advocacy and leadership
2. give technical support, including student assessment and program evaluation
3. conduct inservice training for teachers and parent training for families
4. assist in organization and management of cooperative efforts and consortia, and
5. mobilize or contribute resources.

SCHOOL STANDARDS FOR LOCAL DISTRICTS AND EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICTS

The school standards movement is alive and well in Oregon, even though some aspects of the standards are still being tested and interpreted, according to presenters from the Clackamas County (Oregon) Education Service District, which has been deeply involved in the school standards program.

The workshop covered two sets of standards. One set applies to ESD's while the other prescribes standards for local school districts.

According to Clackamas ESD Superintendent Dr. Robert Burns, the two sets of standards reflect the differing roles of local districts and ESD's. While local district standards are becoming well established, the ESD standards, which were not adopted until 1977, leave room for continuing debate over the role of the ESD. (cont.)

In spite of the differences in population and geography of the education service districts, there are some programs that are common to most. Some of these programs, such as boundary boards, attendance, budget and audits and registration of certificates, are mandated. Other programs offered by most of the larger ESD's include instructional media, programs in special education, data processing, testing and assessment.

Factors such as rising costs for education, students who graduate without learning to read and sweeping private sector developments in management and administration techniques have resulted in a demand for accountability. That accountability can only be established through some form of assessment system. At present, 35 states are developing assessable, goal-based, systems approaches to education.

It's no secret that developing an entire goal-based standards system can be a formidable task for any school district. Since the same standards are required of school districts, small districts that lack the personnel resources of the larger districts are having to rely more heavily on their ESD's for help.

The standards also imply closer cooperation and communication between schools and districts. For example, the local district standards require tighter planning between high schools and their feeder elementary schools.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER INSERVICE

Three somewhat varying views of staff development and teacher inservice were presented by three education service districts in the Portland metropolitan area. Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington County ESD's have all been involved in teacher inservice education for some time and each ESD takes an approach tailored to the needs of the county it represents.

The basic responsibility for initiating staff development programs, of which teacher inservice is a part, lies with the local school district. There are several reasons for placing the responsibility at the local level. First, the district is where the people work and are paid and is where the decisions should be made about the kind of staff development offerings that will be of value to the individual and the organization. Second, local boards often set policy regarding how inservice training and staff development will fit into incentive programs. Finally, the ESD has no mandated authority to provide inservice programs other than at the request of local districts.

Sometimes the requirements for an inservice program may come from a party outside the ESD and local district. A good example is the requirement for classes in first aid and anti-discimination recently required for recertification of teachers and administrators by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission.

Along these lines, the ESD's can help local districts keep abreast of new developments outside the field of education that may have application for the classroom. Some labor contracts now require staff development for contracted employees.

Along with professional contracts comes the need for staff assessment. If a staff member is not performing satisfactorily, the district, in most cases, has some responsibility to help the employee improve his performance.

Multnomah ESD's approach begins with a three-part questionnaire outlining a variety of possible inservice topics and areas of interest. Teachers are asked to rate these as to importance and the results of the questionnaires provide data on which staff development and inservice programs are planned.

Basically, the system has three kinds of offerings. One is the regular teacher inservice program that includes course credit through the Division of Continuing Education. A second style of inservice program includes the administrator and classified staff offerings. The third possibility is the tailor-made inservice to fit a request by a local district for training on a specific subject.

Another approach to staff development is the teacher interest program developed at Washington ESD. This program provides a framework for teachers to share information or techniques at the building, district or county level.

The program is designed to do several things to promote staff growth. Since teachers share ideas with teachers, practical knowledge is pooled. Specific techniques discussed can usually be transported easily to another building or classroom. The sessions also allow a chance for recognition of teachers through sharing of expertise.

ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY FOR RURAL SCHOOLS THROUGH A REGIONAL AGENCY

The assumption that equality exists in education is false, according to Leo Blodgett, superintendent of ESD 112 in Vancouver, Wash. But ESD's are making the effort to provide this equality through a cooperative effort with rural districts by implementing viable alternatives to school consolidation.

For this arrangement to work, a high degree of mutual trust must exist between the district and the ESD. School districts must feel that the ESD respects and protects the autonomy of the local district.

Washington State ESD's are different from regional instruction agencies in other states in that they are prohibited by statute from providing direct instruction to students. This is a factor, according to Blodgett, which sometimes inhibits ESD actions and services.

As determined by the state legislature, ESD's must provide specific services to local districts and state funding is based on these services. These are: administration and management; curriculum development; staff development; grants management; certification; business and fiscal management; personnel and school transportation. Other services provided by ESD 112 include a data processing co-op, unemployment co-op, personnel co-op, vocational education co-op and an instructional media co-op.

Districts approach ESD 112 for help with a variety of problems. Rural districts commonly find their remoteness, low salaries, lack of support staff and limited human resources all constraints to achieving equity with urban districts.

After completion of a local district-initiated needs assessment, ESD 112 can offer consultation, contracted direct services or assistance through its cooperatives.

Blodgett said that the local school board, district staff and superintendent must be aware of interactions between various elements of the local districts and the ESD.

"We try hard to bring the local board along on what's going on," said Blodgett. "Sometimes that's hard, because you can't in any way circumvent the local district administration, or you have problems."

The ESD never takes credit for what is accomplished in the district, notes Blodgett. ESD services are only a supplement to those supplied to the public by the local district.

Hard data showing how ESD 112 is achieving equality in rural schools is hard to come by. However, programs exist for students through ESD 112 where none existed before, and easily-obtainable resources are now available where none was before. Blodgett feels that by virtue of these facts, ESD 112 is helping rural schools achieve equality.

THE IMPACT OF PL 94-142 ON RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE 80'S

Using insufficient funds and often unqualified staff, rural schools have felt the impact of PL 94-142 as they struggle to comply, according to Dr. Roy Brubacher, who said rural educators must look into the future and prepare now for coming changes in education.

Special interest and advocacy groups will make heavy demands on schools for equity while demanding tax reforms which provide schools with less money. Under such tax limitations, rural schools won't be able to provide competitive salaries and will face a teacher shortage within five years. As enrollment declines, schools will be dealing more and more with the non-parent voter who knows little about the school system and won't be a ready supporter.

"Rural educators must become politically active to obtain the dollars necessary to attract qualified teachers," said Brubacher, assistant commissioner of the Colorado Department of Education.

As publicity about the state of the teaching profession continues, competency tests for teachers will become commonplace and test results may determine the difference between high and low salaries.

Demands for equity in rural schools already exceed readily available resources. Brubacher stressed that educators must build on the strengths of rural education. (cont.)

"Research shows that students in rural areas are more highly motivated than those in non-rural areas. Rural teachers realize motivation is a problem, so concentrate on correcting it, while suburban-area teachers see no such problem, since most of their students come from successful, middle-class families."

Brubacher said that the majority of political and industrial leaders attended schools with enrollments of 500 and under. The young in rural areas, he said, actually live the decision-making process. They know the school board members, the superintendent and principal personally - and are aware of changes in the school and community. The smaller the school district, the greater the student participation in activities. According to Brubacher, studies show that successful adults were active and involved students.

Brubacher emphasized that to combat declining resources, educators must involve the community in the instructional program. Expertise exists in the community and such people should be used as teaching resources.

"As a rural educator," summed up Brubacher, "I believe we have lost our voice. For the sake of our schools we need to be heard, to be involved in making the political decisions of our states and nation."

THE NATIONAL RURAL PROJECT - CREATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

The greatest obstacles to providing full service for rural students are recruiting qualified teachers, providing continuous inservice, cultural differences and negative attitudes toward dirt roads and difficult terrain, according to surveys conducted by the National Rural Project (NRP).

The NRP was funded in 1978 by the Bureau of Education to investigate problems encountered and strategies used by state and local education agencies in implementing PL 94-142 in rural areas. Doris Helge, director of the project, discussed information the NRP has gathered and services it can provide to local agencies.

As an answer to the call for recruiting and retaining qualified staff, the NRP set up a Personnel Data Bank. They now list position openings in rural areas across the country in their quarterly newsletter. Another service offered is a Resource Strategy Data Bank designed to assist in solving problems concerning PL 94-142. Strategies which have worked in one rural area could easily work in another, so interested parties can send NRP a request form detailing specific problems in their area and receive information on possible strategies.

Dr. Helge said that PL 94-142 should not be viewed as a black cloud hanging over the rural district.

"PL 94-142 should be used as a positive resource for change," she said. "Since change must occur in order to comply with the law, staff and community expect it. Expectation can be a powerful thing when new ways and ideas are floating around the school yard."

Many areas have used innovative ideas in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. One backwoods community in Appalachia advertises for a one-year teaching position that cannot be renewed. By stressing the beauty of the area and unique situation, the district finds fierce competition for the job. Community residents go along with the idea of having a new teacher every year because it means having the best available teacher, no teacher burnout and it exposes students to a variety of geographical backgrounds, teaching methods and personalities.

Another hollow in Appalachia, which has no telephone service, uses CB radio to draw the community together. The teacher uses the CB to communicate regularly with parents about students' progress.

One rural district uses the mailman in their Child Find program to spot kids left at home while the others go to school.

"Talking about the specifics of creative strategies is what we like best - districts are finding ways to cope, even if it means sky-writing the messages," said Helge.

PL 94-142 AND RURAL AREA SCHOOLS: A CASE FOR CONSORTIUM

Rural education is a difficult entity to define because what is considered "rural education" varies from state to state and depends on the local geography and population pattern, observed presider Tom Huebner, superintendent of the Douglas County Education Service District. The model detailed in this presentation described a consortium designed to meet the needs of rural Douglas County, Oregon, with the implementation of PL 94-142 in 1977.

Patricia Woodburn, consortium coordinator, reviewed PL 94-142 in terms of what it means for local school districts.

The problems encountered in Douglas County included: 1) having unserved and unidentified children; 2) lack of qualified staff; 3) an uneven distribution of federal money within school districts in the county; and 4) a lack of understanding of what 94-142 really mandated. The districts requested that a consortium be established.

The program operated its first year with 292 referrals and 200 students evaluated. Two years later, in 1979-80, there were nearly 700 referrals and 530 students evaluated. From the beginning, the consortium concentrated on testing and evaluating students referred.

Following the initial effort to find students and evaluate their needs, the consortium began to spend more time assisting local districts in placement and the writing of I.E.P.'s. The consortium developed a handbook for use in the districts so that procedures and forms would be consistently used and the districts, therefore, more likely to be in compliance with 94-142. This procedural manual was written after a visit by a federal team which evaluated the program.

During its four years of operation, the program has steadily expanded to meet the service needs of the local districts. In 1979-80, the program consisted of four dimensions: 1) psycho-educational evaluations; 2) multi-disciplinary staffings; 3) consultation of I.E.P.'s; and 4) inservice education. Ms. Woodburn noted that further attention needed to be focused on inservice programs and that turnaround time on evaluations needed to be decreased. These could be met, she said, if out-of-office staff time dealing with district emergencies could be decreased.

For 1980-81, the consortium has made several changes. Services will now be distributed strictly on the basis of financial contribution. A new staff member has been added and they have changed administration of the program to allow for more direct, on-line supervision. With five staff members, the program now has a step-by-step procedure for identifying students, making referrals, evaluative testing, I.E.P. writing, placement and reevaluation every three years.

INSERVICE EDUCATION: THINGS THAT WORK - THINGS THAT DON'T WORK - AND SOME WHY'S

Inservice sessions are usually held to either change a program or change a person - and the latter is the most difficult, according to Dr. Larry Heldman, executive secretary of the Catskill Area School Study Council in Oneonta, N.Y.

Heldman believes that with colleges becoming short of students, the institutions are becoming more sensitive to the needs of schools and teachers, but that much work must be done to make inservice classes viable and worthy of attendance.

He suggested there are six types of inservice classes: 1) college courses or degree programs for which the employer offers monetary incentives; 2) college courses mandated by the state or certifying authority; 3) local or regional inservice provided by the employer or regional agency; 4) inservice for personal motivation with classes related to instructional assignment; 5) in-house classes to introduce new programs; and 6) teacher centers where staff development is the sole purpose.

Heldman was critical of the effectiveness of inservice programs. He said that effectiveness is seldom measured, needs assessments are handled in peculiar ways, selected programs may not be related to actual needs and the programs often lack depth or follow-through.

The ideal for inservice classes, said Heldman, would be to have a neutral observer or mentor spend time in teachers' classrooms to diagnose what was going on and what improvement was needed. This person should be available to the teacher over a long period of time and could make both general and specific suggestions for inservice programs.

PROJECT CHILD: COMPREHENSIVE HELP FOR INDIVIDUAL LEARNING DIFFERENCES

A summer program for educating young children of migrant workers in upstate New York has proven so successful that the National Diffusion Network is publicizing the program in hopes of it catching on elsewhere.

Dr. Gloria Mattera, a professor of education at New York State University in Geneseo and founder of Project CHILD, brought a nutshell version of the program to the RREA Portland conference.

Project CHILD was based on two premises, according to Dr. Mattera: 1) there is no way a hungry child can learn to read, and 2) quality education can not take place if teachers do not know where a child comes from. To illustrate the second point, she showed a slide of a young migrant boy, standing at a table in a barren room, waiting to receive his breakfast of coffee and grits like the other men.

"So if you feed him the pap of Dick and Jane, you've lost him in terms of relating to his life," she explained.

In order to relate education to the lives of their students, the Project CHILD staff had to totally alter their programs to the migrant lifestyle. Since older children provide babysitting services while their parents work in the fields, child care had to be provided. Bus schedules had to jive with the parent's hours in the fields, and balanced meals, clothing, medical and dental care had to be provided.

Parental involvement was another key to the program's success. Migrant workers were hired as classroom aides, a parent advisory board was established to guide programs and a parent's night planned each year in which parents - who might lack academic skills - could show off their talents; a fire-eater was depicted in one slide.

"The idea was to raise the academic level of the children by developing a program that focused on a variety of needs," she said.

Project CHILD did just that, resulting in academic achievement significant enough to win accreditation from the State Department of Education. The project also aimed at erasing negative community attitudes towards migrant families, by making the entire community a resource to the children.

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE RURAL/SMALL SCHOOL: THE OREGON WAY

Oregon, like other states, has tended to neglect the needs of its rural school districts in terms of teacher preparation and inservice. But at least two of the state's teacher preparatory colleges, Eastern Oregon State College and the University of Oregon, have launched programs to remedy that problem.

That was the message presented by Dr. R. Doyle Slater, associate professor of education at EOSC, and Ray E. Hull, director of the UO teacher education field experience program.

At EOSC, potential teachers get to "try on" the experience of teaching in a small school during their sophomore and junior years, before completing a student teaching program as seniors, Slater said.

The vehicle for this on-site experience is the "seventh week recess," in which students trade life on the EOSC campus for a week on the campus of a small Oregon school.

"The students live with teachers or people in the community, and learn first-hand about the rural setting," Slater said.

The EOSC education department stresses to students that teaching in a small district will likely mean teaching several subjects and they may be expected to coach.

The UO offers a somewhat similar on-site program to its education majors.

"We let our students literally take over the curriculum of a rural school for three days, as they find out what it is like to teach and live in a small town," he explained.

But the University's program has another component, he noted. While undergraduate students are manning the district's classrooms, district teachers are treated to a three-day inservice conducted by UO graduate students in education.

EOSC also attempts to meet the needs of those already teaching in small school districts, which are sometimes a long way from population centers which offer a wider range of post-graduate training for teachers. The college offers a flexible system of graduate courses, ranging from the traditional on-campus class to a "professional development program" a teacher can pursue on his or her own while continuing to teach in the small school.

SMALL SCHOOLS: ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Legislative policy of not forcing consolidation or reorganization of small school districts is the achieved goal of the Oregon Small Schools Association, according to Don Miller, executive secretary of the organization.

Miller's group established this policy on the condition that the districts maintained a quality school and met state standards. Previously, the Oregon Department of Education had no policy regarding consolidation of districts and each time the state legislature met it arbitrarily talked of reorganization.

OSSA was created in 1966 with Title III funds, beginning with work in secondary schools and extending their involvement into elementary schools with a second grant. K-12 Districts with fewer than 1,000 ADM and non-unified districts with fewer than 350 students are eligible to belong to the organization.

Important is the communication link between schools. The association publishes a newsletter which goes to 5,000 teachers three times a year and disseminates information about promising practices. The OSSA has held regional meetings on career education in small schools and hosts a Small Schools Summer Institute each year.

Miller said his organization has generated better rapport with specialists in the State Department of Education and helped sensitize them to the needs of small schools. They have learned to look for the small school component in programs as they work with principals and superintendents.

As Miller looks ahead, he sees the necessity to expand the office and hopes he can convince the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education of the need for financial backing of small school programs. He hopes to establish liaisons with organizations such as the Farm Bureau and the Grange and to enhance ties with the education service districts due to the help given to rural schools.

Miller said more help must be given to small schools in meeting state standards.

"In many ways we can capitalize on our smallness, but it is not easy to achieve all the standardization rules," he said.

TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE RURAL CHILD

Placing education students with rural families while student teaching in rural schools so they can get the real flavor of country life is one feature of Brigham Young University's rural education program, according to Dr. Ivan Muse, director of rural education at B.Y.U.

The University formerly had special training classes for teachers going into rural schools. However, they found that special classes were not necessary if the college could get students to stay in the rural districts for a semester.

Muse has the teacher-candidates work with teachers who do five or six preparations per day rather than the two or three expected of urban teachers. Students learn what a traveling teacher does. Muse said the matter of teacher training for rural areas was brought home forcibly when 10 rural superintendents told the college what training had to be given to teachers for them to do well in a rural setting.

Another B.Y.U. program placed 60 prospective teachers in the places of 60 teachers in one district while the regular teachers took a five-day refresher course.

Utah recently formed the Utah Small Schools Association, which supplied the college with a list of students who had an interest in rural teaching. The college also offers a PhD program for rural teachers.

Muse said that most frequently asked-for classes for rural teachers include outdoor education, discipline, self concept, teaching reading, values, minorities, gifted and talented, special education, individual instruction and creativity. They are less likely to seek courses in curriculum design, research and evaluation.

B.Y.U. is trying to combat the high turnover of teachers on Indian reservations and the high Indian dropout rate by seeking out Indians to train for teaching. In one Indian school, for example, of 125 children in sixth grade, only six graduated from high school.

Muse said most teachers dislike going to the reservations to teach because of the lack of entertainment and the isolation. Consequently, they seldom stay long.

The college recruited 11 Ute women who worked as half-time teacher's aides and took college classes half-time. The students were trained with tribal funds. Six graduated from the program and are back teaching at the reservation school.

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(10 - VERY GOOD, 1 - POOR)

First General Session - Mt. St. Helens _____
Second General Session - Norm Hearn _____
I - PL 94-142 and Rural Schools - Consortium _____
II - Talented and Gifted _____
III - Oregon Small Schools _____
IV - Standards for LEA's and ESD's _____
V - National Rural Project _____
VI - Inservice Education _____
VII - Delinquency and Violence _____
VIII - Achieving Educational Equality _____
IX - Staff Development and Inservice _____
X - Project CHILD _____
XI - Preparing Teachers for Small Schools - Ore _____
XII - Teacher Training for the Rural Child _____
XIII - PL 94-142 - Impact on Rural Schools _____
Third General Session - Rep. Nancy Ryles _____

Motel meals _____
Rooms and facilities _____
Columbia Gorge-Timberline Tour _____
Spouse's Winery Tour _____

General rating - entire conference _____

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